



Customer Consultation

We are seeking your views on the changes we are proposing to make within Flagship Group.

Over recent years, through identifying new opportunities and securing partnerships with other housing associations, we have grown considerably. We have continued to provide homes to those in need by acquiring properties and developing new homes across the region.

Flagship Homes is part of Flagship Group and we are proposing to transfer the day-to-day management of our North Norfolk and Kings Lynn properties from Flagship Homes to Victory Housing Trust who joined the Group in January.

This is the start of our formal consultation with you, and we want to ensure that you are informed about these changes and are able to express your views.

This guide tells you about the proposals, why we are considering them and how you can share your opinions. We also want to assure you that the proposals do not negatively impact you, your tenancy or your home.

The Proposal

In a move to provide a more efficient local service for our customers, Flagship Homes is planning to transfer the day-to-day management of its North Norfolk and Kings Lynn properties, to Victory.

Victory will provide Flagship's North Norfolk and Kings Lynn customers with high quality and customer-focused housing management services and Flagship will retain ownership of the properties.

We are aiming to transfer the management by the 6 January 2020.

About Victory

In January 2019, Flagship Group and Victory Housing Trust came together to create the largest housing association in the East of England owning and managing over 28,000 homes.

Victory joined Flagship as a subsidiary, retaining its identity and ensuring continuity of tenancy for its Norfolk residents as well as stability for its staff.

Victory provides homes to over 10,000 residents and manage 5,000 properties, primarily in North Norfolk.

When Victory joined Flagship as a subsidiary, Flagship made a number of partnership promises, including:

- Build 11,000 new energy efficient homes over the next ten years for new lets and transfers. At least 5,000 of these new homes will be in Norfolk. This means we can build more than 2,000 extra homes than we could have done if we remained as individual organisations.
- Invest £500m over the next ten years in maintaining and improving our existing homes, including an additional £20m to regenerate or improve the look and feel of our estates and communal areas.
- Ring-fence £4.5m of savings in our first ten years to invest in priorities identified by you, our customers.
- Improve the range and level of services we offer – we will identify the best practices from Victory and Flagship and share the knowledge across the combined organisations.

Benefits to Customers

For customers like you and your neighbours, the proposal will provide an opportunity for us to do more for you by improving the range and level of services you will be able to access.

Once Victory start managing the Flagship properties in North Norfolk and Kings Lynn, customers will be able to access the service provided by Victory's Tenancy Support and Employment Support Teams.

Victory's dedicated Tenancy Support Team can provide our customers with help and advice on claiming benefits, budgeting and put you in touch with other support services. The Tenancy Support Team can also help with advice around options for moving if your home is no longer suitable for your needs.

Victory's Employment Support Team offer information, advice and guidance to support customers into employment, through 1-2-1 support as well as offering a range of tailored development opportunities such a training courses or arranging volunteering opportunities.

We are confident that this transfer will ensure that customers continue to receive the best possible service as Victory manage 4734 homes in these two local authorities.

Not only will the management transfer consolidate the geographical footprint of our homes it will allow us to focus on delivering an outstanding service.

Frequently Asked Questions

We know any change can raise a lot of questions, so we have tried to answer some typical questions that we think would be important to you.

We will update the frequently asked questions on our website to reflect any new questions raised during the consultation period.

Q1: Will there be any changes to my tenancy/lease or to my rights?

There will be no change to your tenancy agreement/lease, or to your rights and you won't need to sign a new tenancy agreement/lease. Whether you are a tenant, shared owner, leaseholder or want to buy your home using Right to Buy, you will have the same rights and protection that you have now.

Q2: Will I have to move to a new house?

No. The change of management does not affect your right to remain in your current home and does not affect your security of tenure.

Q3: Who will carry out repairs to my home and how do I report a repair after the transfer?

The on-going maintenance and repair of your home will continue to be undertaken by the Group's other core service, RFT Services, and Gasway will continue to undertake your gas/oil servicing and complete the annual safety checks.

Q4: Who will I contact?

You will still be able to contact us on the usual telephone numbers on 0808 168 4555 and by using the Flagship Homes website in the short term.

Q5: Can Victory increase my rent?

Your rent is reviewed every year and a fixed formula, which is set by the Government, is used to calculate the annual increase. Flagship will continue to review your rent annually in line with this formula, and Victory will manage your tenancy in line with any rent change notified by Flagship.

As you may be aware, social housing rents have reduced over the last four years under guidelines set out by the Government's Regulator for Social Housing. However, the Regulator is now allowing housing associations to increase rents by a maximum of CPI (Consumer Price Index i.e. cost of living calculation) plus 1% from April 2020, which may mean that rents will increase by up to 2.7%. Rents will increase across the entire social housing sector from April 2020.

Q6: How will I be able to pay my rent in the future?

The systems and processes in place for contacting us, reporting a repair, paying your rent etc will stay the same for now. In the longer term, we will look at ways to align our services across the group, so there may be future changes and you will be notified of any changes.

Q7: Will I still be entitled to claim Housing Benefit or Universal Credit?

Yes, if you are currently claiming Housing Benefit/Universal Credit, you will still be able to. We will notify the local authority of the change of management and we will let you know if you need to sign or complete a new form.

Victory Housing Trust has a dedicated Tenancy Support Team who can provide our customers with help and advice on claiming benefits, budgeting and put you in touch with services which can help you deal with debts.

Q8: What happens if I have rent arrears?

If you are paying an agreed amount off your rent arrears each week, this agreement will continue, and you will not be asked to make a new agreement. Any court action that is pending against a Flagship Homes Customer will continue as planned, it is important that you keep in touch with Victory Housing.

Q9: What will happen to the personal information that Flagship Homes holds on file about me?

The files held by Flagship Homes with regards to your tenancy will be given to Victory. This will be protected by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Q10: How will staff be affected?

We are involving both Victory and Flagship staff in helping us shape how we will deliver services to our customers.

You will continue to receive a great service from our housing teams, who are focused on delivering outstanding customer service.

Q 11: Are there any disadvantages?

No, we don't believe there are any disadvantages to you or your home with this change of housing management.

Q12: I have more questions – how do I get in touch?

Your feedback is important to us and we want to hear from you, to help shape and inform our future offers.

We would really like your thoughts and opinions on the proposals as well as any ideas on how we can make the most of the opportunities it offers.

We have set up a dedicated email inbox to answer your queries:

CustomerEngagement@flagship-group.co.uk

Alternatively, if you would like to speak to us please call 0808 168 4555.